



Middle East  
Human Capital Trends 2025

# When work gets in the way of work: Reclaiming organizational capacity

## How can organizations create more slack and free up workers to focus on what really matters?

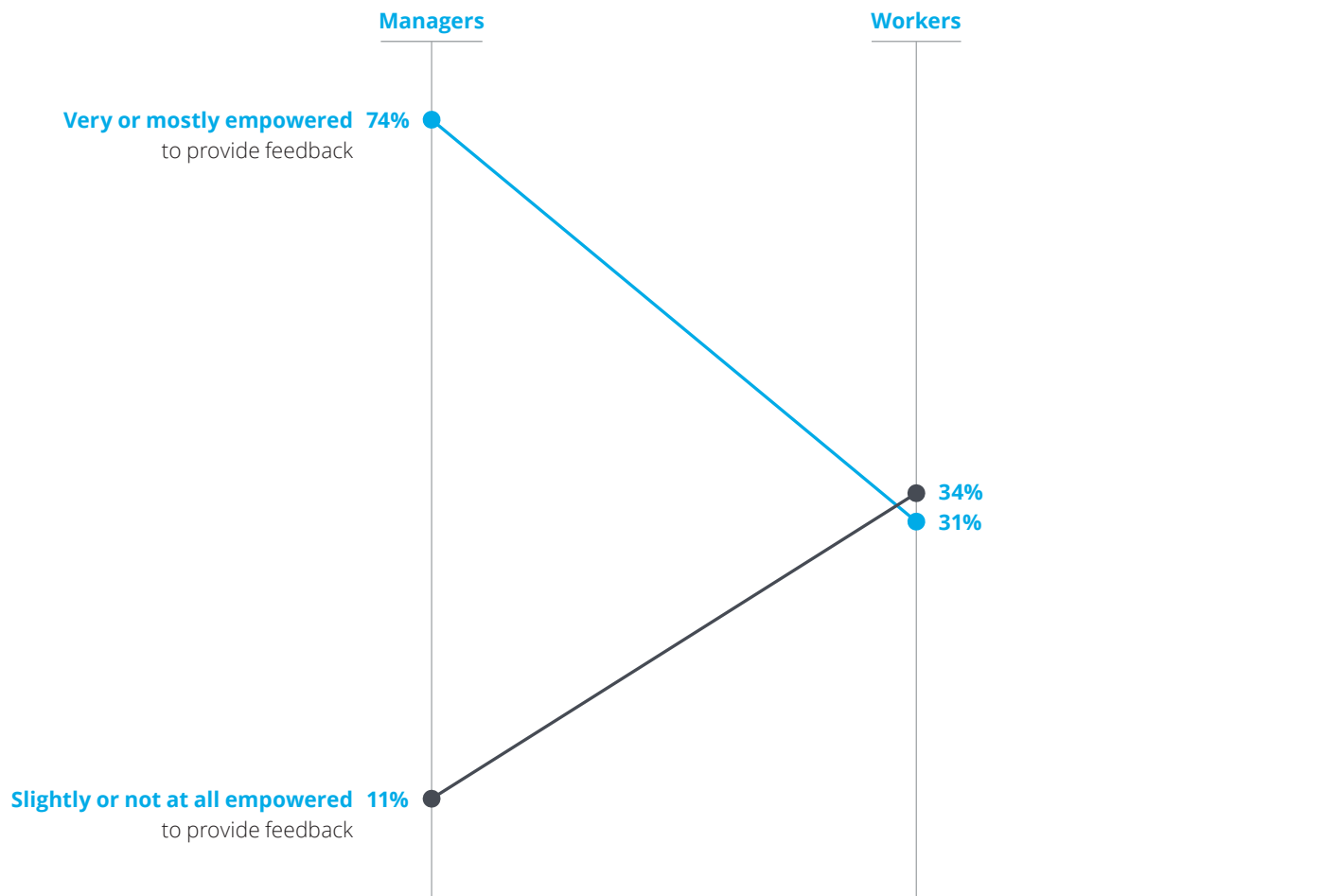
*Michel Abou Nabhan*

In pursuit of their bold national visions, organizations across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar are under immense pressure to deliver transformation at pace and scale<sup>1</sup>. Yet, many find themselves caught in a paradox: employees are busier than ever, yet mission-critical outcomes remain elusive. Meetings, email chains, and fragmented workflows clutter the workday—leaving little room

for the kind of deep, strategic focus required for true progress<sup>2</sup>. This is not just an operational issue; it is a design flaw in how work is structured and prioritized. To deliver on their ambitions, organizations must intentionally reclaim capacity—clearing space for the meaningful, value-driven efforts that actually move the needle.

### Workers feel less empowered to call out nonessential work

Percentage of respondents answering the question, "How empowered are you to provide feedback to your organization on how to make your work more valuable?"



Source: Analysis of Deloitte's 2025 Global Human Capital Trends survey data.

### Understanding organizational capacity

Organizational capacity refers to an entity's ability to effectively utilize its resources—human, technological, and structural—to achieve its objectives. When internal processes become convoluted, they can consume valuable time and energy, diverting focus from strategic goals. This inefficiency can manifest as duplicated efforts, siloed departments, and resistance to change, ultimately impeding an organization's mission.

### Strategies to reclaim organizational capacity

To navigate these challenges, organizations in the Middle East are adopting a range of strategies, in particular:

1. Digital transformation: Embracing technology to automate and optimize processes
2. Process reengineering: Revisiting and refining workflows to eliminate redundancies
3. Strategic partnerships: Collaborating with external entities to enhance capabilities

Surveying the steps taken across the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar illustrates how organizations are tackling the inefficiencies posed by excessive administrative tasks and workloads.



### Embracing technology to automate and optimize processes

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has catalyzed a transformative shift in human resource management, emphasizing digitalization and efficiency. Organizations are increasingly adopting advanced HR technologies to automate routine tasks, thereby freeing employees to engage in more strategic roles.

For instance, Saudi Aramco has implemented sophisticated recruitment technologies, including application tracking systems and AI-driven candidate assessments. This initiative led to a 30% reduction in hiring time and a 25% improvement in candidate quality. Similarly, SABIC's adoption of a comprehensive HR tech platform resulted in a 20% boost in employee satisfaction by minimizing administrative burdens and enhancing performance management<sup>3</sup>.

These advancements reflect a broader trend in Saudi Arabia, where 78% of companies plan to increase investment in HR technology within the next three years<sup>4</sup>. By leveraging digital tools, organizations are reclaiming capacity, allowing employees to concentrate on tasks that align with strategic goals.

### Revisiting and refining workflows to eliminate redundancies

The United Arab Emirates has demonstrated a commitment to enhancing organizational capacity through the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR). FAHR has implemented several initiatives aimed at optimizing HR processes and promoting employee well-being<sup>6</sup>.

One notable development is the Bayanati system, a unified federal HR platform that digitizes over 95% of HR services. This system streamlines processes such as payroll, leave management, and performance evaluations, significantly reducing administrative workload. Additionally, FAHR's AI Mawrid e-learning platform offers AI-driven course recommendations, facilitating continuous employee development.

By reviewing and refining core processes that make up the critical workflows, FAHR has been able to streamline the administrative work conducted by federal employees, liberating them to focus on impactful work, thereby enhancing overall organizational efficiency and employee satisfaction<sup>5</sup>.

### Collaborating with external entities to enhance capabilities

Qatar-based organizations have been similarly proactive in modernizing their HR practices to reclaim organizational capacity. As seen in the UAE and Qatar, firms are increasingly adopting digital solutions to automate routine tasks and foster a more agile workforce.

However, an additional path to organizational efficiency is reflected by Qatar's Civil Service and Government Bureau (CGB) partnering with SAP to modernize the human resources management system for the public sector<sup>6</sup>. This digitally-driven partnership aims to benefit over 85,000 government workers by leveraging cloud computing and advanced technologies such as generative AI. The initiative includes upgrading core HR functions and payroll through RISE with SAP, enhancing the customized Mawared HR system, and implementing SAP SuccessFactors to create a unified, data-centric, end-to-end HR solution. This collaboration will harmonize and automate processes, boost system and employee performance, simplify procedures, and ultimately elevate the entire hire-to-retain journey, furthering Qatar's national digital vision.

### Conclusion: Clearing the way for purposeful work

In conclusion, this phenomenon of “work getting in the way of work” is not just about inefficient meetings or bloated reporting lines—it is about a systemic drift from purposeful, strategic action to organizational busywork<sup>7</sup>.

In the Middle East, governments and leading institutions are waking up to this challenge. Whether it is Qatar’s comprehensive collaboration with SAP to integrate cloud-based HR technologies across its public sector, the UAE’s seamless digitization of government HR functions, or Saudi Arabia’s drive to equip its leaders for agile transformation, the direction is clear: reclaiming capacity is not a nice-to-have, it is mission-critical.

As we look ahead, some lessons emerging from the region include:

- **Digital is not optional—it is foundational.** Technology must be leveraged not just for customer interfaces, but for the core operating systems that govern how people work internally.
- **Simplification is a strategic act.** Stripping out redundant layers, streamlining decision-making, and reengineering workflows should be as much a leadership priority as innovation and growth.
- **Cross-sector partnerships are accelerators.** Working with global tech leaders and specialized consultancies allows Middle Eastern organizations to leapfrog legacy constraints and build world-class internal capacity.

At its heart, reclaiming organizational capacity is about creating the space and systems for people to do their best work<sup>8</sup>; work that is focused, aligned, and impactful. As the region charges forward with bold national visions and unprecedented investments, the organizations that thrive will be the ones that know how to get out of their own way.

### Research methodology

The survey for the Deloitte 2025 Global Human Capital Trends report polled nearly 10,000 business and human resources leaders across many industries and sectors in 93 countries, including across the Middle East region. In addition to the broad, global survey that provides the foundational data for the Global Human Capital Trends report, Deloitte supplemented its research this year with worker-, manager- and executive-specific surveys to uncover where there may be gaps between leader and manager perception and worker realities. The survey data is complemented by more than 25 interviews with executives from some of today’s leading organizations. These insights helped shape the trends in this report.



# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Deloitte Insights. (2023). "When work gets in the way of work: Reclaiming organisational capacity".

<sup>2</sup> Harvard Business Review. (2023). "Stop the Meeting Madness". Retrieved from Harvard Business Review

<sup>3</sup> Saudi Business News. "Surge in Saudi HR Tech Market Amidst Vision 2030 Goals." June 11, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Zimyo Middle East. "Top 7 HR Trends in Saudi Arabia." Retrieved from Zimyo Middle East

<sup>5</sup> Federal Authority for Government Human Resources. "Digital Transformation Initiatives." Retrieved from FAHR

<sup>6</sup> Bayzat. "Top 5 UAE HR Trends for 2023." Retrieved from Bayzat

<sup>7</sup> SAP MENA News. (2024). Civil Service and Government Bureau (CGB) Partners with SAP to Upgrade and Innovate Employee Services for Qatari Public Sector

<sup>8</sup> World Government Summit. (2023). Shaping Future Governments: Innovation and Capacity Building.  
Retrieved from <https://www.worldgovernmentsummit.org>

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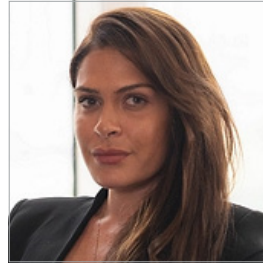
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